

SHAKESPEARE

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

This Shakespeare syllabus seeks to offer candidates the opportunity to:

- develop imagination and creativity
- increase self confidence
- develop vocal techniques
- develop physical stage techniques
- introduce the work of William Shakespeare through a themed series of progressive steps
- develop an understanding of themes, subtext and underlying motives
- instil an enthusiasm and interest in the language and writing of Shakespeare and also Elizabethan theatre

Guidelines for Shakespeare candidates:

- All selections must be performed from memory
- Candidates must bring legible copies of their pieces to the examination for the examiner, and must adhere to all copyright laws.
- Full costume or make up is not permitted, although a suggestion of costume (eg: shawls, practice skirt or hat) and hand props are allowed. (eg: scrolls, sticks, etc.)
- During the course of this syllabus candidates should be encouraged to study a wide range of Shakespeare's plays as well as details of his life and the history of the Elizabethan theatre. This should include knowledge of religious and political influences on his themes, the meaning of his dramatic language and how Elizabethan theatre shaped his writing.
- It is suggested that the texts used for study are from the **Arden Shakespeare Series**. This series provides detailed notes including, a glossary and language guide and also biographical and historical notes.
- Comprehensive theoretical and historical background notes to support this syllabus are available on request from the New Era Office.
- **Candidates are not permitted to present work which they have already submitted at another grade. Candidates found to be repeating work will be disqualified and fees will be forfeited.**
- **In line with current standard Health and Safety advice, all candidates must ensure they are warmed up both vocally and physically before the examination.**

LEVEL 1 – FOUNDATION

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Candidates should:

- achieve enjoyment and progress through the learning process
- increase confidence
- demonstrate a sense of appropriate theatrical performance
- demonstrate basic skills of interpretation
- demonstrate the development of technical skills
- demonstrate a basic understanding of performing Shakespeare
- demonstrate a basic understanding of the language and writing of Shakespeare
- demonstrate a basic knowledge of Elizabethan Theatre

At this level no scene should exceed 3 minutes.

GRADE 1 (10 Minutes)

Candidates must be 11 years or over

Marks awarded at this grade:

Stage Presence **20 marks**
Voice Production **20 marks**

Theme - Introductions

Candidates should:

1. Perform **one** of the following from **A Midsummer Night's Dream**:

- Puck
Act II Scene 1
"Fairy thou speakest ..."
- Lysander
Act I Scene 1
"Therefore hear me, Hermia ..."
- Bottom
Act III Scene 1
"Masters you ought to consider ..."
(Omit Snout)
- Fairy
Act II Scene 1
"Over hill, over dale ..."
- Helena
Act II Scene 2
"O, I am out of breath ..."
- Titania
Act II Scene 1
"Set your heart at rest ..."

(40 marks)

2. Discuss with the examiner:

- how the speech chosen helps the audience understand more about a character or explains what is going on
- the plot of A Midsummer Night's Dream

(20 marks)

GRADE 2 (10 Minutes)

Marks awarded at this grade:

Stage Presence **20 marks**
Voice Production **20 marks**

Theme - Communication with audience

Candidates should:

1. Perform **one** of the following speeches:

- The Boy Henry V
Act III Scene 2
“As young as I am ...”
- Sebastian Twelfth Night
Act IV Scene 3
“This is the air ...”
- Launcelot Merchant of Venice
Act II Scene 2
“Certainly my conscience ...”
- Viola Twelfth Night
Act II Scene 2
“I left no ring with her ...”
- Imogen Cymbeline
Act III Scene 6
“I see a man’s life ...”
- Helena A Midsummer Night’s Dream
Act I Scene 1
“How happy some or other ...”

(40 marks)

2. Discuss with the examiner:

- the events leading up to the speech
- the play from which the speech is taken
- the different parts of the Elizabethan playhouse where the audience would sit or stand

(20 marks)

GRADE 3 Foundation Medal (10 Minutes)

Marks awarded at this grade:

Stage Presence **20** marks
Voice Production **20** marks

Theme - Prologues and Chorus

Candidates should:

1. Perform a Prologue from **one** of the following:

(An extract may be selected from the Prologues, but it must not be less than 15 lines)

- Chorus Henry V
Act I
"O for a muse of fire ..."
- Chorus Henry V
Act II
"Now all the youth of England ..."
- Chorus Romeo and Juliet
Act I
"Two households both alike ..."
- Chorus Romeo and Juliet
Act II
"Now old desire doth in his deathbed ..."
- Rumour Henry IV Part 2
Act I
"Open your ears ..."
- Time The Winter's Tale
Act IV
"I, that please some ..."

(40 marks)

2. Discuss with the examiner:
 - the role of the Prologue
 - why some plays need Prologues
 - Elizabethan Playhouses (the candidate can bring a plan or drawing to aid discussion)
 - the play from which the speech is taken

(20 marks)

LEVEL 2 – INTERMEDIATE

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Candidates should:

- demonstrate well developed skills of interpretation
- project stage personality
- produce well modulated and projected vocal work
- demonstrate empathetic and imaginative characterisation
- show a detailed knowledge of the play from which the pieces are taken
- demonstrate confident performing skills
- show an understanding of the metre and rhythm
- demonstrate a good understanding of performing Shakespeare
- demonstrate a good understanding of the language and writing of Shakespeare
- demonstrate a good knowledge of Elizabethan Theatre

At this level no scene should exceed 4 minutes.

LEVEL 3 – ADVANCED

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Candidates should:

- demonstrate well developed performance skills
- convey the style and verse form of the pieces
- produce a range of style and emotion
- show a confident and detailed knowledge of the plays from which the pieces are taken
- reflect their depth of knowledge through their interpretation of character
- demonstrate an understanding of themes, subtext and underlying motives
- demonstrate an understanding of iambic, trochaic, anapaestic, dactylic rhythm and metre
- demonstrate a depth of technical understanding required when performing Shakespeare
- demonstrate a comprehension of the language and writing of Shakespeare
- demonstrate a depth of knowledge of Elizabethan Theatre in general

At this level no scene should exceed 5 minutes.

GRADE 7 Silver Medal (20 Minutes)

Marks awarded at this grade:

Stage Presence	15 marks
Voice Production	15 marks

Theme – Heroes, Heroines and Major Characters

Candidates should:

1. Perform a speech by a **hero, heroine or major character** of their own choice.
(30 marks)
2. Perform **a contrasting speech** of their own choice from another of Shakespeare's plays.
(30 marks)
3. Discuss with the examiner:
 - the reasons for the choice of speeches
 - any aspect of the characters chosen and their situations
 - the plays from which the speeches are taken
 - aspects of performing Shakespeare in an Elizabethan theatre
(10 marks)

GRADE 8 Gold Medal (25 Minutes)

Marks awarded at this grade:

Stage Presence	15 marks
Voice Production	15 marks

Theme - Soliloquy

Candidates should:

1. Perform a true **soliloquy** from any Shakespearean **tragedy** of their own choice.
(30 marks)
2. Perform **a contrasting speech** of their own choice from another of Shakespeare's plays.
(30 marks)
3. Discuss with the examiner:
 - Shakespeare's use of the soliloquy
 - the reasons for the choice of speeches
 - any aspect of the characters chosen and the techniques involved to perform them
 - the plays from which the speeches are taken
 - aspects of the rhythm and metre used by Shakespeare
 - aspects of Shakespeare's life and the times in which he was writing
(10 marks)